

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Huseby House

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Location

street & number 511 East Sixth Avenue

N/A

not for publication

city or town Helena

N/A

vicinity

state Montana code MT county Lewis and Clark code 049 zip code \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x nomination     request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets     does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

    national     statewide x local

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property     meets     does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

    entered in the National Register     determined eligible for the National Register

    determined not eligible for the National Register     removed from the National Register

    other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

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## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

|                                     |                  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | private          |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public - Local   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public - State   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public - Federal |

### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

|                                     |             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | district    |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | site        |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | structure   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | object      |

### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 1            | buildings       |
|              | sites           |
|              | structures      |
|              | objects         |
| 1            | <b>Total</b>    |

### Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN; Second Empire

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE

walls: BRICK

roof: METAL- Copper; Synthetics-Membrane,  
Plastic; ASPHALT

other:

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### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

#### Summary Paragraph

Located on a well-treed major east-west running street linking the politics of the state capital to the commerce of the downtown business district, the Huseby House is a Late Victorian Second Empire style two-story building retaining many of its original features. Constructed in 1891 by John Huseby, a stone mason and brick layer, the Huseby House displays many of the qualities intended by its builder. Several changes that have occurred to the house were the result of the earthquake of 1935.

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### Narrative Description

The Huseby House is situated in the middle of the 500 block on Sixth Avenue, the main street linking the state capitol with the historic downtown business district. It was built on property that is part of the original Helena townsite.

The house is a Second Empire Victorian town house. It is two-story brick bearing construction with a stone basement. Construction is a 9' deep rubble stone basement with rough cut 2x10 beams on 16" centers. Originally there were full length windows and a door in the front of the basement. These were later bricked in and shelves were inserted after the 1935 earthquake. The walls of the first floor are three bricks thick and the walls of the second floor are two bricks thick. The beams between the first and second floors are rough cut 2x10s on 16" center resting on the interior most brick.

#### North Elevation

The primary façade of the house, which is situated on the south side of Sixth Avenue, faces north. A short walk through two massive elms leads to a two story porch with the main entry, a one-light-two-panel wood door, on the northwest corner of the house. To the west of the entry door and its transom, is a 13-light front window with colored and frosted panes of glass. Protecting the entry is a small deck-styled porch with wood railing. Above and aligned with the ground floor entry is a second story multi-light wood door providing access to the top of the deck porch and porch railing. A double hung window is immediately west of the door.

The east half of the house, balancing the entry and porch is a bay which extends from the stone basement to the top of the second story where it is covered by a small gable. The first floor central bay window is topped by leaded stain glass; the lateral windows are one-over-one double hung. Second story bay windows include paired one-over-one double hung center windows and single one-over-one double-hung lateral windows.

The true Mansard roof, interrupted by the small gable covering the bay, is only on the front of the house and is faced with copper shingles. Original bracket panels and cornices connect the brick walls to the second story roof. All the windows on the front have granite window sills, cut work directly above the window openings and brick segmentally arched tops.

Originally, the house had entries on all three levels; a ground level stairway led down to a lower level door. On the ground level was the main porch and on its roof was a small veranda for the second floor door. After the 1935 earthquake, a cement slab replaced the original front porch with square wooded posts holding up a roof. Because the cement slab began pulling away from the main house, it was removed and the current two story porch, which uses the original porch footprint, was added in 2003. When the cement slab was removed there was clear evidence of a fire which may have been the cause of the loss of the original front porch.

#### West Elevation

The west side of the house is bordered by a small walk way and the neighboring house is only 12 feet away. Typical of a townhouse, only two small one-over-one double hung windows, one lighting the basement staircase and the other lighting the staircase to the second floor occur in the west elevation. These windows display cut work directly above the window

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openings and brick segmentally arched lintels and brick sills. Other than these two windows the west brick wall is plain. The two interior wall chimneys on the west are flush with the brick wall so they can only be discerned by looking to the top of the wall where they protrude another two feet. The east and west roof parapet hides the main sloping portion of the roof which displays a three feet elevation decrease across the length of the thirty foot roof.

### **East Elevation**

The east side of the house had a side yard, but as is traditional with townhouses the wall is solid brick except for one small one-over-one double-hung window in the middle of the second story. Like the windows on the west wall, this window displays the cut work directly above the window opening, a brick segmented arched lintel and a brick window sill. The two interior wall chimneys on the east are flush with the brick wall so they can only be discerned by looking to the top of the wall where they protrude another two feet. A parapet graces the top of the elevation as previously described for the west elevation. After the earth quake of 1935, a cement retaining wall was built along the base of the east wall.

In 2001, a two-car end-to-end garage was added on the east elevation. It is set back five feet and is clad with horizontal clapboard siding; the siding displays a color of paint that closely matches the natural brick of the house. It also has a Mansard roof with a gable on the front covered in black asphalt shingles and a shed roof on the side.

### **South Elevation**

The original south wall of the house had two full length double-hung windows with cut work above and the brick segmented arch lintels as well as the brick window sills. There was also a backdoor which led directly into the kitchen. The 1935 earthquake caused significant damage to the south wall, most of which was replaced with new bricks at that time. A small wooden back porch was attached to the back door and contained a floor to ceiling cupboard on the west side and windows on the south and east side as well as an outside back door. There was also an outside stairway to the basement which had a door. In 2002 the back porch and the outside stairway covering were removed and a sun room was added across the back, south wall of the house. The original window on the southeast corner was converted into a French door, linking the back parlor with the sunroom.

A 1947 building application indicates a shower was added on the main floor in the half bath, a cement floor was poured in the basement and the basement stairs were rebuilt. At this time the home was made into two apartments, one on the main floor and one on the second floor. The Polk's City Directories suggest the house was changed back into a single family dwelling in 1963.<sup>1</sup>

Originally, the Husebys had a small barn on the alley in which they kept a horse and wagon which hauled Mr. Huseby's bricks and rocks for use in his profession as a brick layer and stone mason. It is not known when this building was removed, but in 1930, according to a building permit application, a garage was built. It is not known when the garage was removed.

Since the time of the Husebys there have been nine owners of the home. After Anna sold the house in 1947 to John P. Morgan, he in turn sold the house in 1950 to Roscoe S. Butler. In 1957 Mr. Butler sold the house to Mabel E. Baxter. She lived in the house until 1967 when she sold the house to Victor J. Rice. Mr. Rice sold the home a year later to Harold E. Blanchard. The Blanchards lived in the home from 1968 to 1974 when they sold it to Thomas Olson. Mr. Olson only kept the house for two years and he then sold it to Michael T. McCourt. In 1976 to 1977 Michael T. McCourt owned the house, and in 1977 Diedre J. Crammer purchased the home. The current owners, Chester G. Miller and Irene C. Morton purchased the home in 1989 from Ms. Craner.<sup>2</sup>

The interior retains the original floor plan, apart from the half bath on the main floor which originally was part of the front hall. Except for the kitchen and this half bath, the home retains the wide routed baseboards, decorative woodwork, bulls-eye rosettes and picture rails on the main floor. On the second floor, each of the four rooms preserves its transom

<sup>1</sup> R. L. Polk & Company. *Helena City Directory*, 1963, Householders Section, p.6.

<sup>2</sup> Property Records of Lewis and Clark County, 140-210.

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above the entry doors. The current owners conducted significant renovation including removing dropped ceilings, barn wood, and layers of old wallpaper.

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### **Integrity**

The Huseby House retains very good integrity including integrity of location, setting, feeling, association, design, materials, and workmanship. Although some changes have occurred over time, including modification of the original porch, replacement of the south elevation, the addition of a rear sun room, and the addition of a recent garage, the building still strongly conveys its original character and the design intent of the builder, John Huseby, over 100 years after its construction.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT; ARCHITECTURE

### Period of Significance

1891-1962

### Significant Dates

1891

### Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

### Cultural Affiliation

### Architect/Builder

John Huseby

### Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins with the completion of the construction of the house in 1891 and continues through 1962.

### Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Located on a well-treed major east-west running street linking the politics of the state capital to the commerce of the downtown business district, the Huseby House is representative of the comfortable homes constructed in Helena during its transition from a rough mining community to a territorial capital. John Huseby came to Helena in 1880 and worked as a stone mason, eventually learning the brick laying trade. Steady work during the late 1880s, the result of one of the most prolific building booms in Helena allowed Huseby to construct the Huseby House in 1891. The Huseby House is eligible for listing in the National Register under criteria A and C. Under Criterion A, the Huseby House is associated with the building boom that helped morph Helena from a small mining community to the biggest city in Montana (territory) at the time. Not only is the house associated with that specific building event, the builder of the house, John Huseby—a brick layer and mason—literally had a hand in the physical construction of not only the Huseby House, but also many other buildings constructed during Helena's rise to prominence. The building is also eligible for listing under Criterion C. The house, a Second Empire brick townhouse, is characteristic of the period, and continues to display details representative of the style.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The presence of humans in the Helena area extends back thousands of years. Climate change required adaptation among the hunters and gatherers of the area resulting in the gradual emergence of hundreds of Native American cultural groups across the continent. Plateau Indians, including ancestors of the Salish, occupied the landscape while direct and indirect pressures from contact with North America's more recent European immigrants over 500 years ago brought many new indigenous groups into the region after 1600. Shoshone, Nez Perce, Blackfeet, and Crow Indians, passed through the area seasonally. By the late eighteenth century, the Blackfeet established their homeland on the eastern slopes of the Rockies, reaching deep into north-central and southern Montana.<sup>3</sup>

**Settlement of Helena**

The origins of Helena date to July of 1864 and are credited to four prospectors and their discovery of gold along the banks of a mountain stream they referred to as "Last Chance". Their discovery set off a strike leading to the formation of the town. In addition to miners attempting to procure wealth from the ground, the strike brought all aspects of people hoping to if not make it rich, then make a decent living off the mines. Carpenter, blacksmiths, shopkeepers, bartenders and a variety of other businessmen flooded to the new town. By 1870, hundreds of businesses operated in Helena, and the burgeoning downtown, near present-day State Street, stretched for blocks in all directions.

Log cabins housed many early businesses. Sawmills milled lumber to add false fronts to the early shops. Similar to many western towns however, the number of wood buildings in such close proximity provided the necessary ingredient for conflagrations. Helena suffered the fate of many early towns as several major blazes ravaged the town during its initial decade. Brick and stone replaced wood buildings transforming Helena from a mining camp to a fledgling permanent community.

Helena's location near the heart of Montana's goldfields served the town well as it became an exchange point for goods arriving by steamboat through Fort Benton on the Missouri River and the gold and silver extracted from the mountains. As mines near other Montana communities played out, Helena's importance grew. In 1875, the territorial capital moved from Virginia City to Helena. Helena boomed. By 1880, over 3000 people called Helena home. The increase in

<sup>3</sup> Michael P. Malone, Richard B. Roeder, and William L. Lang, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1991), revised edition, 3-16; K. Ross Toole, *Montana: An Uncommon Land* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959), 117-120.



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population was not lost on the railroads as by 1883, the Northern Pacific's first train arrived strengthening ties between the town and the outside world. The arrival of the railroad helped spur continued population growth resulting in the quadrupling of residents in a few short years. As the local economy continued to excel, wealthy businessmen constructed and often named in their own honor, grandiose business blocks. The success of the burgeoning city was not limited to the downtown; both practical and beautiful homes displaying numerous architectural styles were constructed near the downtown. The different architectural styles included Gothic Revival, Romanesque, and French Second Empire architecture; many buildings that combined the different styles also appeared. The growth of Helena also attracted several prominent and talented architects during this period. Soon modern conveniences such as electricity, telephones and trolley cars became commonplace.

However, as will be discussed in further detail below, the Panic of 1893 soon brought the prosperous time to heel. The federal curtailment of annual silver purchases, and the ensuing depression sent Helena and other mining communities across the West into a tailspin. Though the town never again attained its earlier prosperity, it did settle into a more stable economy based on the affairs of state government.

### **Physical Development of Helena**

*This section taken directly from Helena: A Historic City, by Herbert L. Jacobson, Donald L. Byrd, and Chere Jiusto, prepared for the City of Helena and MTSHP, January, 1982.*

Helena's physical growth, that is the actual buildings, was largely determined by its topographical features. By virtue of the rich gravel bars extending from the surface to bedrock located at the lowest levels of the gulch, placer mining usurped that location as building sites for the first year. Bridge Street, located to the east side of the gulch, became the first commercial area of the mining camp.<sup>4</sup> The earliest pictures of Helena in 1865, show the original porch footprint business establishments extending from Main Street to the top of the hill at Rodney Street. Nearly all of the structures were constructed of log. Bridge Street was also the center of Helena's first residential neighborhood because there were building sites available there and because the proprietors of its first businesses lived in the back portions of their stores. It was impossible for the town to develop to the west because of the steep hillsides that comprised the gulch's western edge. Main Street was extended north, down the gulch as mining was terminated, claim by claim, and it was here that the first permanent structures of stone and brick were located.

The old Fire Tower, known as the "Guardian of the Gulch," is now the symbol for the City of Helena, and with good cause. From its prominent location, a person could have witnessed nine fires in a period of five years, from 1869 to 1874. The last most general and disastrous fire of all occurred January 9, 1874. It began in Chinatown. The wind was blowing furiously. The magnificent International Hotel, one of the finest buildings ever erected in Helena, costing \$75,000 and from Bridge Street to Grand Street was gutted. Following the 1874 fire, the Lewis and Clark County commissioners passed a fire ordinance forbidding the erection of frame buildings on Main Street below Wood Street on May 22, 1874.

The delivery of water to the area immediately east of Last Chance Gulch was an added advantage for its development as Helena's first residential area. The first water system consisted of a series of hollowed-out logs that transported water from Grizzly and Oro Fino Gulches. In 1869, the Helena Water Company improved and expanded the system by extending pipes along Warren Street to Fifth Avenue and east on Fifth to Rodney Street (*two blocks west of the Huseby House*). Finally, the construction of the Hale Water Works reservoir above Pine Street in 1884 assured the east side of an adequate water supply.

As far as Helena's early business district is concerned, it should be remembered that as late as 1884, it was only four blocks long, extending from the corner of Bridge Street, north on Main Street to Sixth Avenue, and only two blocks deep, from Jackson Street on the east to Clore (Park Avenue) on the west. The site now occupied by the Power Block (southwest corner of Sixth and Main), was taken up by the Holter's Lumber Yard and Mill.

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<sup>4</sup> Bridge Street became State Street in 1890 to commemorate Montana's statehood.

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A number of the early merchants who built buildings, in the original business district had a great deal of faith in future events in that they didn't have title to the land upon which they built. The United States Land Office was first established in Helena in September 1867, and until then no titles other than possessory right, could be acquired. It was not until sometime after this, March 20, 1868, that the Helena townsite was filed on by Probate Judge Truitt. The patent was dated June 15, 1872, and it became possible to acquire title to the ground on which stood at least \$2,000,000 worth of improvements.

The development of local industries in Helena was largely a response to the construction needs of the community. The first industry was lumbering and by the summer of 1865, two sawmills and a planing mill were operating at capacity. Stone quarries were opened both east and west of Helena and by 1867, brickyards had been constructed. The basic bedrock formation in the Helena area is limestone and lime kilns were built in Oro Fino and Grizzly Gulch just a mile south of town.

By 1884, several other basic industries had been added. There were three sawmills and a planing mill, four breweries, two foundries, two brickyards, an electric light company, a soda water factory, and a sash, door and blind factory. Within six years, two more sawmills and planing mills had been established, another electric light company, a vinegar works, a sampling works and a gas works (coal-gasification plant).

The height of Helena's building boom was 1889. No less than 425 homes were built in 1888. The City Directory of 1889 lists nine architectural firms, four brick manufacturers, two stone quarries, eight lumber companies, three tile manufacturers, five stone contractors, fourteen carpenters, eight painters, four wallpapers, and three calciminers. There were also four cornice manufacturers, three mantel firms, and two sky light manufacturers.

Although the townsite of Helena was laid out in 1864-65, there was a definite need to have it resurveyed, which was done by a professional in 1884. There is relatively little difficulty in tracing the ownership of various lots within the original townsite. However, it is a far different question in the adjoining land that was incorporated into the city later. A definite pattern of the original ownership emerges. Nearly all of it was first a mining claim. With little or no thought to actually mining the land, filing a claim upon it was tantamount to gaining ownership. And enterprising miners, with an eye to the future and ambition to establish a permanent city, quickly claimed all of the land surrounding the townsite. The government land office, established in Helena 1867 deeded the title of the land to those having filed claims, creating the basis for a quick fortune in real estate development. The next step in the process was the surveying, sub-dividing and filing of addition plats to the city with the county commissioners. Then, sale of lots to prospective builders and real estate investors and speculators completed the process.

A study of the additions to the city and the dates they were filed reveals its pattern of growth (see map of Helena and listing of Helena Additions on continuation pages). However, like every other city, large portions of each division were not built upon before other additions were added. That is, there were many unoccupied city lots even as the perimeter of the city was being enlarged. For example, both the Lennox Addition on the eastside and the Kenwood Addition on the westside were created in 1890—at least two miles from the extremities of the city. Yet it was not until the late 1950s and 1960s that the town eventually built out to join them.

The first addition to the original townsite was the Mauldin Addition on Helena's southwest side in 1879. In both 1883 and 1887 there were eight additions added, the former caused by the coming of the Northern Pacific Railroad to Helena in June of that year. During the years 1888 and 1889, six more were added each year. By the year 1893, a watershed had been crossed in the development of Helena. From that date until 1948, only two small additions were added to the city.

The Panic of 1893, a severe national depression, marked an end of an era.

By the latter part of the 1880's, Helena, with a population of 15,000, was the foremost commercial city in the Territory. Prosperity and growth continued until the Panic of 1893, which coincides with the termination of the most energetic and opulent era of architecture in Helena's past...the depression of 1893 eliminated many fortunes in Helena, thereby terminating that period of romantic commercial building—the most productive architectural period in Helena's past. It had lasted less than a decade,

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from 1886 until 1893, but in no other Montana city was the romanticism and optimism of Nineteenth Century businessmen so clearly and boldly expressed.<sup>5</sup>

The real estate developers, speculators, and their unwitting customers were hard hit:

A real estate boom in the late 1880's triggered the rapid expansion of Helena. Suddenly people began to buy vacant lots. There were few of these in the original townsite so owners of adjacent property laid out "additions", subdivided them into lots and sold their acreage at prices, if they could sell their entire holdings, would net them 100% to 200% on their investment.

One of the first to sense the possibilities of the boom was Charles Cannon, proprietor of the leading grocery store in Helena. "Charlie Cannon", as he was locally known, was gifted with imagination, and he envisaged a greater Helena, with additions and suburbs which would accommodate a much larger population. So he laid out his acre property adjoining Helena into town lots and began advertising in the papers. One of the favorite advertisements read: "Lots-lots of lots in the Cannon Addition at lowest prices."

The newspapers began featuring real estate. They carried stories everyday about the property sales and thus helped along the boom. In a year the people were real-estate mad, paying hundreds of dollars for a lot which probably cost the owner only a few dollars. The craze lasted two years, and in that time the owners of land adjoining the Helena townsite made millions. When the boom subsided, many purchasers found themselves loaded up with lots which they could not put to profitable use. The town did not grow fast enough to justify the inflated values. Several speculators lost all they had invested and those able to hold on had to wait years before their lots became marketable.<sup>6</sup>

Up to 1893 (*two years after the construction of the Huseby House*), the city of Helena witnessed unprecedented growth, and a huge expansion of economic, political, and social influence. This optimism and fiscal reward translated into the physical development of the town with substantial construction within and outside the newly-formed additions to the town.

### **John H. Huseby and the Huseby Home**

John H. Huseby came to Helena in 1880 as a stone mason. In 1889, his address was listed as "rooms 6 Ashby block" in the 1889-1891 Helena, Montana Directory.<sup>7</sup> Huseby, born in 1865 in Norway, was married to Anna, a lady 16 years his junior who was also born in Norway. By 1910, John and Anna had two children; Marie, nine, and Henry who was five at the time of the census.<sup>8</sup> Not long after arriving in Helena, John expanded his trade to include bricklaying.

Huseby's arrival coincided with the Helena's greatest period of growth—1880 to 1890. This period marked not only incredible population growth, but also concomitant growth related to construction. Population-wise, 3,624 people called Helena home in 1880; only 10 years later, the town boasted a population of 13,834.<sup>9</sup> By 1890, 26 passenger trains came through Helena, including two transcontinental and 24 regional lines.<sup>10</sup> People weren't the only thing arriving in town as

5 Willard H. Robinson, "Helena's Fabulous Business Blocks," *Montana the Magazine of Western History*, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, p. 46.

6 James Blair Walker, *A Boy Pioneer in the West and Other Remembrances*, n.p. 1963.

7 [http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?gsfn=John+H&gsln=Huseby&gss=angs-g&pcat=ROOT\\_CATEGORY&h=2787&recoff=4+5+6&db=1890helenmt&indiv=1](http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?gsfn=John+H&gsln=Huseby&gss=angs-g&pcat=ROOT_CATEGORY&h=2787&recoff=4+5+6&db=1890helenmt&indiv=1)

8 1910 *United States Federal Census* database.

9 Jacobson, Herbert L., Byrd, Donald, L. and Juisto, Chere. *Helena: An Historic City*. Montana Historical Society, 1982, p.14.

10 *Ibid.* p.7.

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the first load of bananas arrived in 1891.<sup>11</sup> The continued growth of the town resulted in descent wages for skilled trades people; in 1889, brick layers earned \$6.50 to \$7.00 a day and stone masons made \$5.00 a day.<sup>12</sup>

The economic prosperity of the late 1880s instilled a confidence in Helenans, including John H. Huseby regarding the permanence of the community. By 1891, steady work and the good pay allowed John to build his residence at 511 East Sixth Avenue. The west edge of the additions of Hoback & Cannon, and Blake, established in 1883 and 1896, respectively, and marked by the north-south running Gem Street, sit literally three lots east (100 feet) of the Huseby House. John and Anna lived in this house for 24 years and Anna owned the house for 32 more years.

The modest Second Empire brick townhouse was spacious for them with a front entry hall, front and back parlors and kitchen on the main floor and four bedrooms and a bath on the second floor. The 1892 Sanborn map indicates the house was one of the few buildings on the block not of frame construction. By 1891, the year the Huseby house was built, the double block of 500 East Sixth had an apartment house on the corner and eight other modest homes spread out along the block. The Huseby House is the only all brick home and is unique to the area for this reason. Its location, four lots in from the corner of Davis on the south side of Sixth Avenue, was ideal for both his business, which he conducted out of his home, and for their home.

Less than two blocks west of the Huseby House, Rodney Street between Sixth and Broadway and Warren and Davis streets, became a commercial apartment and rooming house center in the 1880s, likely because of the proximity to the courthouse. Many of these buildings were utilitarian in function and appearance. By the late 1880s, numerous apartments sprang up in the area including one located on the corner of Sixth and Davis, less than a block west of the Huseby House. Similar to his neighbors to the immediate west, Huseby rented out part of his home. The 1910 United States Federal Census indicates R.F. Wilkinson, age 47, lodged with the Husebys that year.

Like much of Helena, the effects of the 1935 earthquake were felt at the Huseby House. The earthquake caused significant damage to the south wall, much of which was replaced with new bricks at that time. A small wooden back porch was attached to the back door and contained a floor to ceiling cupboard on the west side and windows on the south and east side as well as an outside back door.

The Husebys built a small barn on the alley where they kept a horse and wagon which hauled Mr. Huseby's bricks and rocks for use in his profession as a brick layer and stone mason. It is not known when this building was removed, but a 1930 building permit application indicates the construction of a garage. The garage was subsequently removed at a later unknown date. A second building application from 1947 indicates construction of a shower on the main floor in the half bath; a cement floor was poured in the basement and the outside basement stairs were also rebuilt. Though the house previously served lodgers in addition to the sheltering the family, it was at this time that a conscious effort was made separating the house into two apartments, one on the main floor and one on the second floor. The Polk's City Directories suggest the house returned to a single family dwelling in 1963.<sup>13</sup>

The location of the Huseby House was prime in terms of access; at the time of its construction, the electric trolley ran on Davis, just 1/4 of a block to the west. Helena continued to grow, eventually garnering the state capital, which was constructed at Sixth and Montana avenues, eight blocks to the east. Soon after the construction of the Huseby House, full measure of the Panic of 1893 stung Montana and Helena especially as a result of federal curtailment of silver purchases.

Despite the significant downturn in the economy, John continued to stay busy working and being involved in numerous associations. John belonged to many fraternal and political organizations during his lifetime. He was a member of the Scandinavian Republican Club and supported Benjamin Harrison for President in 1889. He ran for alderman of the seventh ward in 1894 and later for mayor on the socialist ticket. A member of the Bricklayers & Mason International

<sup>11</sup> *Helena Daily Herald*, April 15, 1891, p.1.

<sup>12</sup> Jacobson. *Op.cit.* p.9.

<sup>13</sup> R. L. Polk & Company. *Helena City Directory*, 1963, Householders Section p.6.

Huseby House  
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Union of America, Union#4, John attended their state conference in 1910. The Odd Fellows and the Woodmen of the World lodges also counted John as a member.<sup>14</sup>

His political activism included election to the 4<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly in 1896 as a Populist. Also known as the People's Party, it promoted public ownership of telephone and telegraph systems, the railroads, and steamship lines. The party also supported a system of graduated income tax, the free and unrestricted coinage of silver, the elimination of national banks, and the direct election of United States Senators.<sup>15</sup> During his time in office, John was the victim of an attempted holdup on Sixth Avenue near his home. Though the incident was reported in the paper, it apparently ended well. The "highwayman" pulled a gun and ordered him to throw up his hands; John apparently slowly backed away and went home without further interference.<sup>16</sup>

During his political service and through his entire life, John worked out of his house as a masonry contractor until 1915, when he died at age 58.<sup>17</sup> John and Anna raised two children in the house. Their son, Henry, who passed away in 1956, ran a confectionery and ice cream shop with George Viscon at 320 N. Main in 1929.<sup>18</sup> Daughter Marie became a teacher. Anne owned the house until 1947.<sup>19</sup> Since title passed from the Husebys, nine different owners occupied the building.<sup>20</sup> The current owners have owned the house since 1989.

### **Helena in the Twentieth Century**

Although John Huseby stayed busy with work, Helena's economy and population declined after 1893 and building construction regressed. The town slowly changed from a commercial and transportation center to an economy based on the government. Centralization of federal and state government resulting from the New Deal legislation of the 1930s spurred the change; Helena administered public works projects and relief programs. Highway and bridge construction increased in important as the first system of paved highways were constructed.

Population figures throughout the history of Helena truly reflect its history. Three thousand six hundred twenty-four people lived in Helena in 1880. By 1890, only 10 years later, the population exploded to 13,834. This dramatic population increase symbolized Helena's greatest decade of growth and its greatest building period. The Panic of 1893 ravaged Helena's economy, demonstrated by the sharp 35 percent population decrease the following decade to 10,700 in 1900. An additional 40 years passed before Helena witnessed a population similar to that of 1890.

By 1940, Helena again achieved a population similar to that of its 1890s glory. New construction increased, dominated by homes east and west of the downtown business district, near the older more established neighborhoods. The entry of the United States into World War II greatly aided Helena's and the surrounding area's economy. The East Helena smelter operated at full capacity processing lead, a critical material in the war effort. The increase in rail transport resulted in the hiring of more train crews and maintenance personnel. Smelter and the railroads crews were considered as part of the strategic labor force, and, exempt from the draft. Fort Harrison served as an Army training camp for the First Special Forces, a combined American and Canadian paratroop regiment. After the War, the return of veterans sparked another building boom in Helena with hundreds of homes built in both the eastside and Westside areas of the city.

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14 Documents found in the attic of the Huseby house.

15 State Legislater, 188901898. Found online at:  
<http://montanahistorywiki.pbworks.com/w/page/21639841/State%20Legislators,%201889-1898>

16 *The Anaconda Standard*, "That Lone Highwayman, He Attempted to Hold Up John H. Huseby, But He Didn't Do It." October 31, 1896.

17 *Independent Record*, January 24, 1915, p.7.

18 R. L. Polk & Company. *Helena City Directory*, 1929, p.161.

19 Property Records of Lewis and Clark County, 140210, 193483, 248571.

20 *Ibid*.

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### Architectural Significance:

The Huseby House reflects a late Victorian style displaying Second Empire touches. Second Empire elements were common in townhouses during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Residences often display a rectangular, square, or simple box form and are highly symmetrical. High Mansard roofs typify the style. However, townhouses usually had a true mansard only at the front façade with parapet walls occurring on the sides of the building.

Decorative details may include iron cresting on the roof, heavily bracketed cornices, quoins, and balustrades. The general effect provides strength mixed with elaborate detailing, appropriate to the style's Napoleonic roots. Fenestration often includes windows placed over an entrance in pairs or occasionally as triple sets. Frame homes of the style were designed with elaborate window hoods supported by brackets, multiple layers of wood trim, often with incised patterns. Decorative eyebrow shapes often occur over windows, and doors and dormer windows were common. Brick homes apt to be simpler than wood due to the associated expense of elaborate brick and stone work. Bay windows were often used as an architectural feature on a façade that could accommodate ornamentation.

Second Empire entrances often display a projecting pavilion in the form of a porch or elaborate canopy with some form of protection from weather. The entrances are usually elevated above the grade by several steps and doors are typically double or an extra wide single door.

The Huseby House displays many of the characteristics associated with this style of building. The house retains the key exterior materials dating from the period of its historical significance, and embodies the distinctive characteristics of a late Victorian Second Empire style townhouse. The stylistic characteristics include a high Mansard roof and associated parapet walls, simple bracketed cornices, balustrades, fenestration eyebrow moldings, bay windows, porch with associated detailed covering, and slightly elevated entrance grade.

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### Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Documents found in the attic of the Huseby house.

Helena Abstract and Title Company. Warranty Deed, 3056803.

Helena Montana Directories, 1889-91. *Record for John H. Huseby*. Found at: [http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?gsfn=John+H&gsln=Huseby&gss=angs-g&pcat=ROOT\\_CATEGORY&h=2787&recoff=4+5+6&db=1890helenmt&indiv=1](http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?gsfn=John+H&gsln=Huseby&gss=angs-g&pcat=ROOT_CATEGORY&h=2787&recoff=4+5+6&db=1890helenmt&indiv=1).

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*Independent Record*, March 18, 1894, p. 1.

*Independent Record*, January 24, 1915, p. 7.

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Moss, Roger W. & Winkler, Gail Caskey. *Victorian Exterior Decoration*. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 1987.

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*Plat of the Town Site of Helena As entered at the U. S. Land Office*, p. 2.

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R. L. Polk & Company. *Helena City Directory*. 1888,1892,1915,1929,1950,1962,1963.

Sanborn-Perris Map Company. Fire Insurance Maps of Helena for 1890 and 1892.

State Legislator, 188901898. Found online at:

<http://montanahistorywiki.pbworks.com/w/page/21639841/State%20Legislators,%201889-1898>.

*That Lone Highwayman, He Attempted to Hold Up John H. Huseby, But He Didn't Do It*. The Anaconda Standard, October 31, 1896.

Toole, K. Ross. *Montana: An Uncommon Land* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959), 117-120.

*U.S. Naturalization Record Indexes, 1791-1992*.

Walker, James Blair, *A Boy Pioneer in the West and Other Remembrances*, n.p. 1963.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)  
☐ previously listed in the National Register  
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register  
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark  
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

☒ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☐ Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Less than 1 acre  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

NAD27

1 12 421032 5159522  
Zone Easting Northing

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

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**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Helena Townsite 1869, S31, T10 N, R03 W, Block 533, W2 LT 16, E 30 FT LT 17

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary is drawn to include those lots and block historically associated with the building.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Irene C. Morton  
organization owner date May 12, 2012  
street & number 511 East Sixth Avenue telephone (406) 442-9179  
city or town Helena State MT zip code 59601  
e-mail millermorton@bresnan.net

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Huseby House

City or Vicinity: Helena

County: Lewis and Clark

State: Montana

Photographer: George Miller

Date Photographed: January, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

0001 of 0005\_ Huseby House. North Elevation, view to the South.



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0002 of 0005. Huseby House. North Elevation, view to the South.

0003 of 0005. Huseby House. North and East elevations, view to the Southwest.

0004 of 0005. Huseby House. West elevation, view to the South, Southeast.

0005 of 0005. Huseby House. South elevation, view to the North.

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**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Chester G. Miller and Irene C. Morton

street & number 511 East Sixth Avenue

telephone (406) 442-9179

city or town Helena

state MT

zip code 59601

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

Husbey House

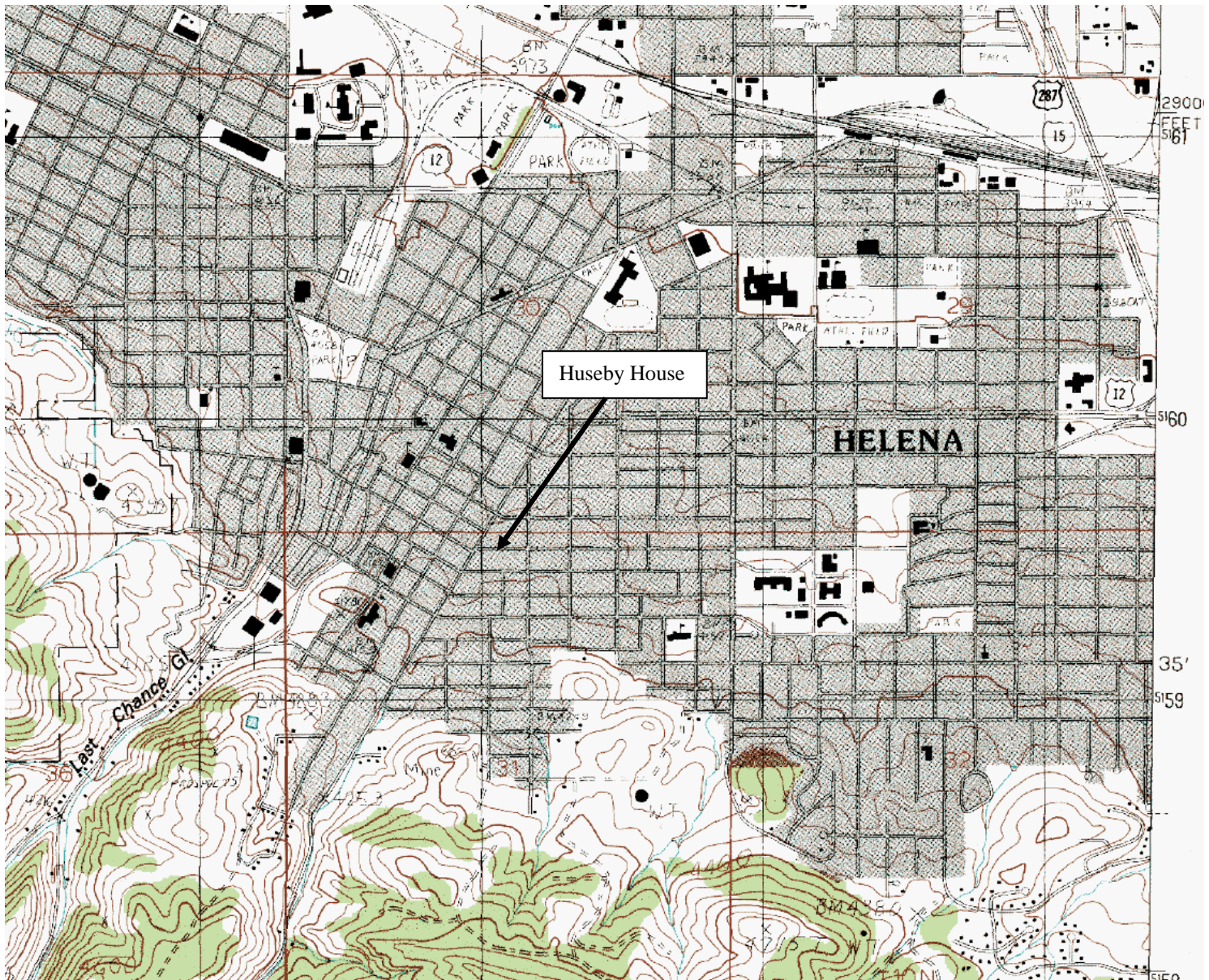
Name of Property

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Location of Huseby House. Found on the Helena 7.5' quadrangle map (Provisional Edition 1985).

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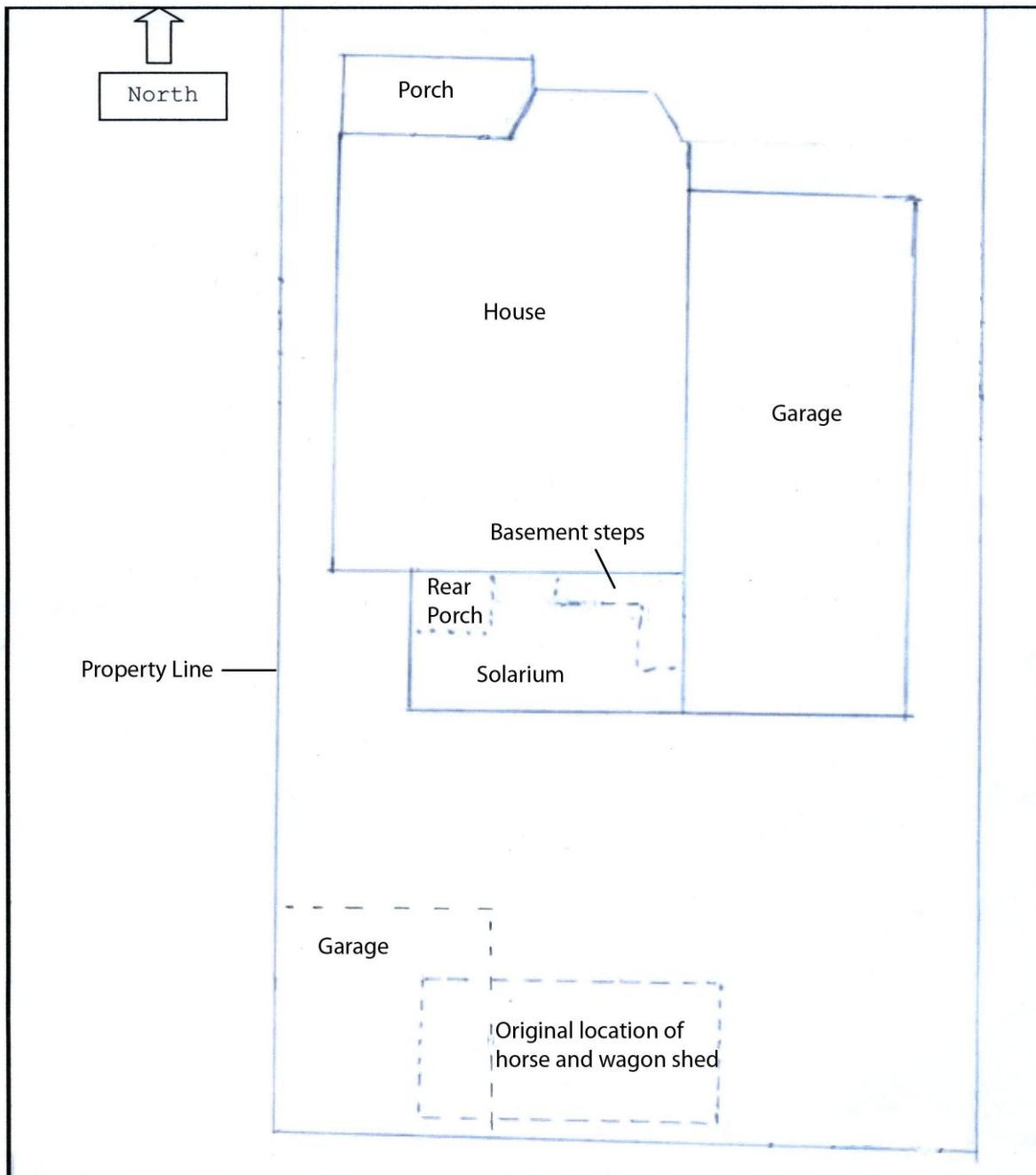
Husbey House

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**Sketch Map of the John H. Huseby House. 511 East Sixth Avenue, Helena, MT.** Dashed lines indicate features no longer extant.



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Husbey House

Name of Property

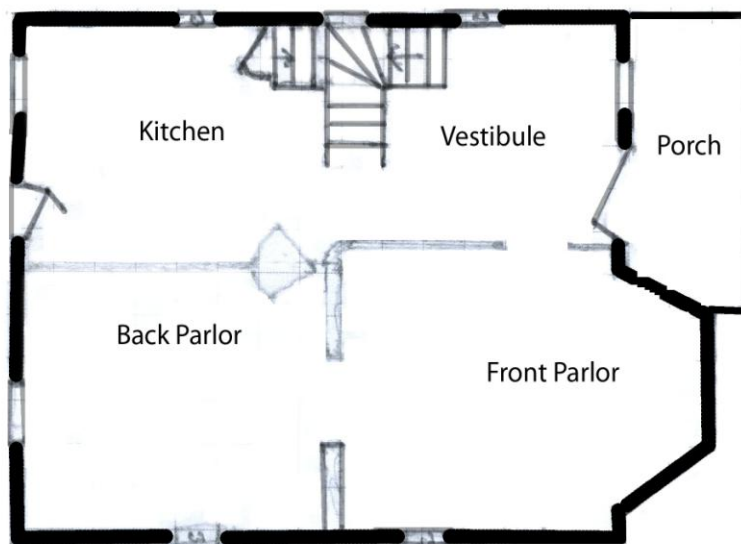
Lewis and Clark County, MT

County and State

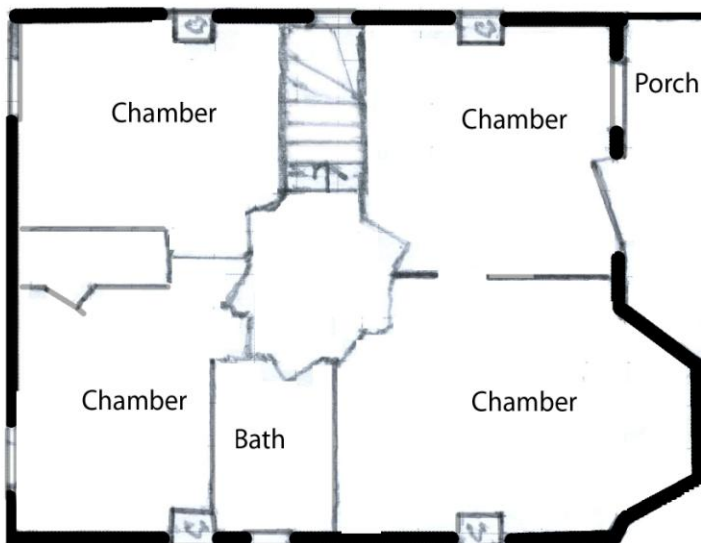
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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Main Floor



Second Floor



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**Main and Second Floor Floorplan of Huseby House**

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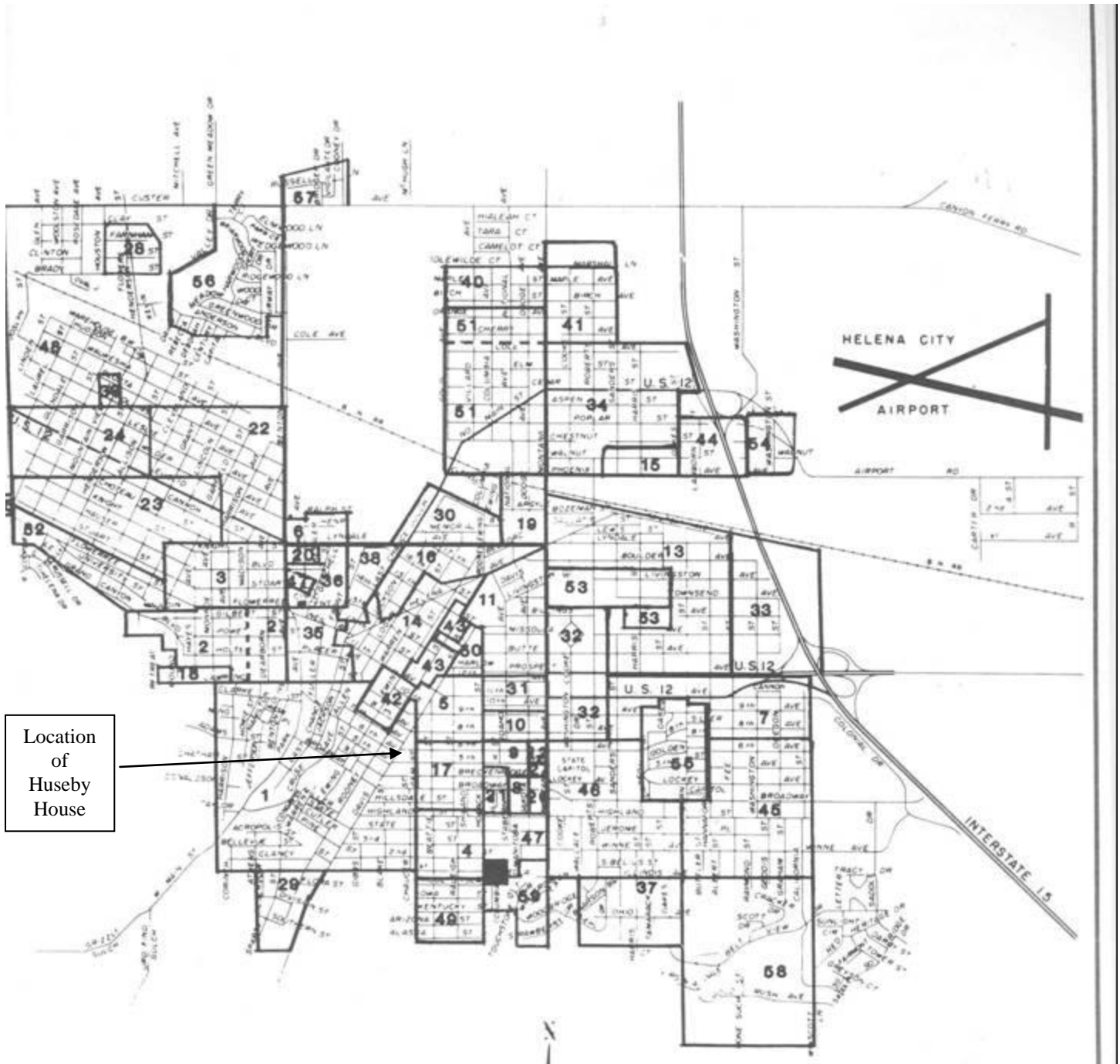
Name of Property

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**Map Showing Additions to Helena.** Numbers correspond to the table on the following page.

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**DEVELOPMENT OF HELENA**

| <b>ADDITION</b>             | <b>DATE</b> | <b>ADDITION</b>            | <b>DATE</b> |
|-----------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Original Townsite        | 1865        | 32. Floweree               | 1888        |
| 2. Maudline-Storey          | 1879        | 33. Northern Pacific #2    | 1888        |
| 3. Hauser                   | 1880        | 34. Flowergarden           | 1888        |
| 4. Easterly                 | 1881        | 35. Thompson Placer        | 1888        |
| 5. Hoback & Cannon          | 1883        | 36. Getchell-Childs Placer | 1888        |
| 6. Capitol Hill             | 1883        | 37. Fairmont Park          | 1889        |
| 7. C. W. Cannon             | 1883        | 38. Chessman-Davis Placer  | 1889        |
| 8. Gabisch                  | 1883        | 39. Sizer                  | 1889        |
| 9. Tietjen                  | 1883        | 40. Richmond Hill          | 1889        |
| 10. Basset                  | 1883        | 41. Hersfield              | 1889        |
| 11. Lockey                  | 1883        | 42. Allen                  | 1889        |
| 12. 10 <sup>th</sup> Street | 1883        | 43. Rodney Street Tracts   | 1889        |
| 13. Northern Pacific #1     | 1883        | 44. Phoenix                | 1890        |
| 14. Central #1              | 1884        | 45. Lenox                  | 1890        |
| 15. Depot Parchen           | 1885        | 46. Corbin                 | 1890        |
| 16. Central #2              | 1885        | 47. Chris Kenck            | 1890        |
| 17. Blake                   | 1886        | 48. Broadwater #2          | 1890        |
| 18. Shaw                    | 1886        | 49. Courthouse             | 1891        |
| 19. Grand Avenue            | 1886        | 50. Burlington             | 1891        |
| 20. Parchen                 | 1887        | 51. Cambridge & Grand      | 1893        |
| 21. Valley View             | 1887        | 52. Collins & Neil         | 1908        |
| 22. Broadwater #1           | 1887        | 53. Conrad Stanford        | 1914        |
| 23. Cannon                  | 1887        | 54. Airport                | 1948        |
| 24. Ming                    | 1887        | 55. Carson                 | 1949        |
| 25. Barretts                | 1887        | 56. Sunhaven #1            | 1959        |
| <b>26. Montana Avenue</b>   | <b>1887</b> | Sunhaven #2                | 1960        |
| 27. East Valley View        | 1887        | Sunhaven #3                | 1962        |
| 28. Flowers                 | 1888        | Sunhaven #4                | 1963        |
| 29. Joseph Cox              | 1888        | 57. Barney                 | 1969        |
| 30. Central #3              | 1888        | 58. Prospect Heights       | 1973        |
| 31. Beattie                 | 1888        | 59. Shaffers               | 1977        |

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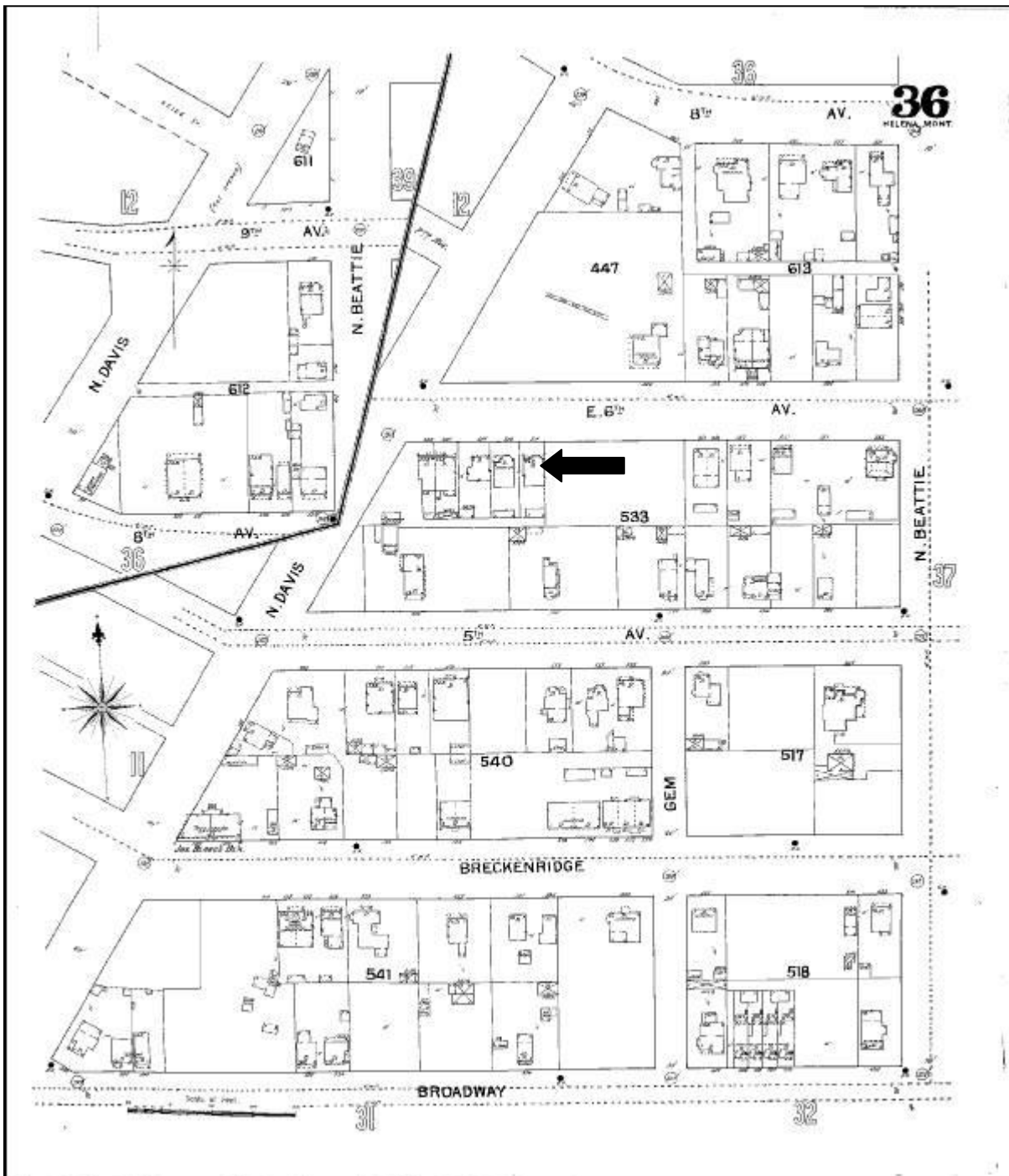
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1892 Sanborn map showing location of Huseby House



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|  |
|--|
| Huseby House                             |
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| County and State                         |
| Name of multiple listing (if applicable) |

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**National Register Photographs**

Name: John H. Huseby House  
 County and State: Lewis and Clark County, Montana  
 Photographer: George Miller  
 Date of Photograph: January, 2012  
 Location of original negative/digital image: Montana State Historic Preservation Office. Helena, Montana.  
 Description and view of camera: Huseby House. North elevation, view to the south.  
 Photograph: 0001

Name: John H. Huseby House  
 County and State: Lewis and Clark County, Montana  
 Photographer: George Miller  
 Date of Photograph: January, 2012  
 Location of original negative/digital image: Montana State Historic Preservation Office. Helena, Montana.  
 Description and view of camera: Huseby House. North elevation, view to the south.  
 Photograph: 0002

Name: John H. Huseby House  
 County and State: Lewis and Clark County, Montana  
 Photographer: George Miller  
 Date of Photograph: January, 2012  
 Location of original negative/digital image: Montana State Historic Preservation Office. Helena, Montana.  
 Description and view of camera: Huseby House. North and east elevations, view to the southwest.  
 Photograph: 0003

Name: John H. Huseby House  
 County and State: Lewis and Clark County, Montana  
 Photographer: George Miller  
 Date of Photograph: January, 2012  
 Location of original negative/digital image: Montana State Historic Preservation Office. Helena, Montana.  
 Description and view of camera: Huseby House. West elevation, view to the south southeast.  
 Photograph: 0004

Name: John H. Huseby House  
 County and State: Lewis and Clark County, Montana  
 Photographer: George Miller  
 Date of Photograph: January, 2012  
 Location of original negative/digital image: Montana State Historic Preservation Office. Helena, Montana.  
 Description and view of camera: Huseby House. South elevation, view to the north.  
 Photograph: 0005

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Huseby House. North elevation, view to the south. 0001



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Huseby House. North elevation, view to the south. 0002

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Huseby House. North and east elevations, view to the southwest. 0003

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Huseby House. West elevation, view to the south  
southeast. 0004



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Huseby House. South elevation, view to the north. 0005